



FILED
Marilyn Burgess
District Clerk
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By: A. Dozier
Deputy

**Sixth Re-Adoption of the COVID-19 Operating Plan
for the Harris County Judiciary District Courts,
County Courts at Law & Probate Courts**

Dated: June 1, 2022

Under the current Fifty-First Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster issued by the Texas Supreme Court (Misc. Docket No, 22-9036), the local administrative district judge is encouraged to re-adopt a local COVID-19 Operating Plan and minimum health standard protocols.

I have determined that the following minimum standard health protocols for court proceedings and the public attending court proceedings that will be employed in all courtrooms and throughout all public areas of the court buildings will be used in the setting of in-person proceedings. These protocols and the local COVID-19 Operating Plan shall remain in effect through August 1, 2022, subject to amendment and extension by a subsequent order.

General

1. All judges will continue to comply with the Emergency Orders issued by the Supreme Court of Texas and Court of Criminal Appeals.
2. All judges and court staff will continue to comply with the health and safety protocols set out in this Order.

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 99.6°F, or with new or worsening signs or symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, or having known close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 will not be permitted to enter the building and should seek medical advice.
2. Judges and court staff will continue to practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations and masking in the courthouse when individuals are within three feet. Each judge may make a general exemption in his/her courtroom.
3. Protective Measures: The sneeze guards installed by the County will remain in place. The County will continue to strive to provide each court with face coverings and gloves for staff and participants who show for in-person matters. The County will, throughout the day, clean "touch points" and will, as able, perform a thorough cleaning of the complex at least once a week.

Scheduling

Each court will strive to reduce its number of in person hearings and will strive to schedule in person hearings in such a way as to maintain proper social distancing within the courtroom itself.

Social Distancing

1. All persons who enter the courthouse will be required to maintain adequate social distancing.
2. Elevators, restrooms, hallways and common area spaces will continue to follow the most recent social distancing recommendations.
3. In each courtroom, each judge will be responsible for determining and maintaining appropriate social distancing. Each judge may make exemption(s) in his/her courtroom as he/she deems appropriate generally or for a specific case.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, outside of elevators on each floor, outside of each courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallways.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.

Face Coverings

1. Masks covering both nose and mouth are required for all individuals in a **COURTROOM** or **JURY ASSEMBLY** for a hearing, trial, jury selection or other court proceeding unless exempted by the Court. Only the Local Administrative District Judge or the Chair of the Jury Committee for the Board of District Judges may provide an exemption from wearing masks in Jury Assembly.
2. Masks covering both nose and mouth are required for all individuals with symptoms, a positive test or exposure to someone with COVID-19.
3. Masks covering both nose and mouth are strongly encouraged in all courthouse buildings when individuals are not able to social distance appropriately, including if people are less than three (3) feet of one another.
4. Masks covering both nose and mouth are *strongly encouraged* while in the courthouse. In particular, all immunocompromised individuals, those at high risk for severe disease, or those who have a household member or social contact who is immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease are strongly encouraged to wear a mask while in the courthouse.
5. Courts will have the right to turn away an individual who declines to wear a mask in the Courtroom or Jury Assembly. Individuals will be encouraged to bring face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided, as long as supplies last.
6. Each Court may choose to allow individuals to remove their masks in the Courtroom; however, masks must still be worn in the general court facilities if the individual is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, tested positive for

COVID-19 or has been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

Signed: June 1, 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Latosha Lewis Payne', written over a horizontal line.

Judge Latosha Lewis Payne
Local Administrative District Judge
Harris County, Texas



I, Marilyn Burgess, District Clerk of Harris County, Texas certify that this is a true and correct copy of the original record filed and or recorded in my office, electronically or hard copy, as it appears on this date.

Witness my official hand and seal of office this June 2, 2022

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Marilyn Burgess, DISTRICT CLERK
HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

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